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THOUGH DEEPENING TRIALS THRONG YOUR WAY

by

ROBERT AVESON

In the year 1864, in the county of Wiltshire, there resided an honest, industrious man, named George Davis, and his faithful wife. Their family consisted of four children — two boys and two girls. Brother Davis and wife were staunch members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and through their frugal savings procured sufficient means to emigrate to the frontier from where the Saints crossed the plains. The time for them to leave drew near, so they sold their furniture and prepared for their journey to Utah. Just before leaving they were invited to spend a day or two with relatives, a few miles from their home. They had secured berths on the sailing vessel *Hudson*, which was to sail the latter part of May of that year. While on their visit word came from headquarters of the mission at Liverpool that the date of sailing of the ship *Hudson* was postponed a few days later. This made their visit longer. The change of date seemed somewhat unfortunate, although it might have been for the best. Their youngest child was taken sick, and the afternoon before their departure, the child died. This was somewhat perplexing, as they could not remain for the funeral and be in time for departure of the ship.

"We must stay and see our child buried," said the loving mother.

"I should very much like to do so," said the bereaved father, "but it is hardly possible. We have secured our berths on the vessel, and the ship will not wait for us. We will arrange with our relatives for the child's burial."

That evening they completed, as best they could, the funeral arrangements. And you can judge how little sleep the parents had that night.

Next morning they were up early. The mother was heart-broken; the father was very sad, and the other children were full of grief. The

time was right at hand when they had to say farewell to the dead babe and their relatives. With tears in her eyes, Sister Davis knelt down by the side of the remains of her beloved child and kissed its little cheeks and hands.

As the time was drawing near for their departure on the train, Brother Davis leaned down to his wife, kissed her and said, "Come, my dear girl, this is a hard trial, but we must go. We have done all we can for the dear little child."

They gave a parting kiss to the babe, bid good-bye to their relatives and started for the railway station.

After a voyage of six weeks and four days, they landed safely in New York, July 19, and then proceeded on their journey by rail, reaching the village of Wyoming — the frontier — August 2nd of that year. Nothing of importance transpired on their journey so far. They were just beginning to recover from their feelings of sadness through the loss of their dear child, when, after traveling on the plains a few weeks, another sad affliction came in their pathway.

The immigrants were subject to different kinds of sickness, such as mountain fever, cholera, dysentery, etc. Comforts in those days on long journeys were very few; luxuries were hardly thought of. When sickness came, they could not run to a doctor or to a drug store. It required great faith for even the hardy and strong to pass through prairie life hardships. The bread was cooked in a bake skillet, on a fire made of "buffalo chips," brush and limbs of trees. Such was camp life. There were many sore trials and troubles on the way.

Poor George Davis! Serious illness overtook his partner in life — an attack of dysentery, which only lasted a few days. The trial was hard when parting from their little child, but it was a sore trial indeed to see his beloved wife in the throes of death. He did all that was possible to aid and assist in her dying condition. Some of the sisters from nearby camp wagons volunteered their service, but she was too weak — too far gone for human aid.

What made matters worse, his youngest son was also sick with the same disease and the father little thought he was so seriously ill. The boy was laid down in another part of the wagon, and in a faint voice whispered as loud as he could: "Daddy! Daddy!"

The grief-stricken father went to his assistance and leaning over to him said: "What do you want, Benny?"

Whispering in his father's ear, he said: "I want some soup, Daddy."

"Lie still, my boy, for a little while, and Daddy will bring you some."

Brother Davis then turned his attention to his wife, who, in a low-toned voice, said to him: "I feel I am going to leave you, George; take care of the children."

"Oh, Nell, don't talk like that. What can I do without you? Let me pray for you."

He breathed a prayer to his Heavenly Father to spare her life, if only for the sake of her children. At the close of his prayer, he turned toward his beloved wife — she was breathing her last breath. It was an awfully sad scene. George was broken-hearted; his other two children were present, the tears rolling down their checks.

"We have traveled long together
Hand in hand, and heart in heart,
Both through fair and stormy weather,
And 'tis hard, 'tis hard to part."

We can imagine the feelings of a loving parent bereft of a faithful partner through life; far, far away on prairie land, a long distance from village or town.

That night George was so bewildered and confused through the death of his wife, that he almost forgot his darling sick boy. But just as daylight appeared next morning, he lit a fire and made some soup. And taking it to him he said: "Here, Benny, is your soup."

It was too late — too late; the child was in the throes of death.

"Oh, Benny, Benny," said the broken-hearted father, "speak to me once more. Call me Daddy."

There was no answer; the little spirit had fled.

This was a double bereavement.

Almost overcome with grief, George bowed down his head and exclaimed: "What have I done that such awful trials should befall me!"

Some of the campers gathered around and tried to console him. On such occasions, however, words of sympathy are comforting but inadequate to appease the grief-stricken.

Preparations were made for the burial of wife and child. They were laid side by side, in one grave. The funeral service was very brief — no

music, no flowers, no coffin; the bodies were wrapped in a sheet and covered with a blanket. It was an affecting scene — many eyes were wet — yes, even the eyes of stout hearts were bedimmed with tears.

My story is not yet compleet. It was said that half the world is not aware what trials and tribulations the other half has to endure.

Some days elapsed before Brother Davis began to feel in his normal condition. His two remaining children clung to him and they could have been observed marching along ahead of the train — the boy on the one side of the father, the girl on the other, hand-in-hand.

They arrived in Great Salt Lake City the latter part of October of that year (1864), and it is supposed that they went to Provo. Brother Davis was glad to be in Zion. Figuratively speaking, he enjoyed "smooth sailing" but it was only for a brief period.

Not many months passed ere he was called to endure another severe trial — his boy was accidentally drowned. The only remaining child — a girl — grew up to womanhood and was married.

What became of George? My informant was unable to learn of his whereabouts for the past half-century. It is probable he again married and had a family, for the last heard of him he was trying to find another partner through life.

"Though deep'ning trials throng your way;
Press on, press on, ye Saints of God!
Ere long the resurrection day
Will spread its light and truth abroad."

Deseret Evening News, Jan. 3, 1926.

TAKE NO THOUGHT WHAT YE SHALL SAY

Diary of

BENJAMIN F. JOHNSON

As I came into Erie County, Pennsylvania, I put up at a tavern and as I had traveled all day in the snow and was very tired, I was just going to bed when it occurred to me that before I left home Col. Harmon had asked me to call upon his friends in Erie County, Penn., if I ever went there. I had my slippers on, my candlestick in hand to go to my room, when the door opened and a man covered with snow came

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P.S.

LMW

George Davis married Mary Goddard who had come across the waters with the family. Her husband being ill at sea, died and was buried at sea. The Davis family helped her and come across the plains with her. In due time she married George and helped him and his two children. They too had a family together.

Mary Ann Davis the only child left, when she was about 18 yrs. old church leaders came to her home and ask her if she would consider taking William Denton Moulton as her husband. She would be his second wife. A polygamist wife. His first wife Mary Ann (same name) could not become pregnant and they promised her if she would allow William to take a secound wife she would be blessed with children.

After much thought Mary Ann Davis agreed to marry the older man and be his secound wife.

As the church leaders had promised both women did bear children at about the same time.

Mary Ann Davis is the great grandmother of Linda Landgren

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